

tive relief by applying the full range of remedies available under law, including remedies that have previously been employed by the Department of Justice or approved by the courts. I also look forward to working with Attorney General Reno and Members of Congress to enact legislation, as needed, to clarify and reinforce the protections of the Voting Rights Act.

In 1965, President Johnson hailed the Voting Rights Act as "a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield." Effective enforcement of the Voting Rights Act will allow us to continue that triumph. Inclusion of all Americans in the political process is necessary if we are to work together as communities, States, and a Nation to address the difficult challenges that confront us all.

Remarks on the Nomination of Doris Meissner To Be INS Commissioner and an Exchange With Reporters

June 18, 1993

The President. Thank you all very much for coming. I want to say a special word of thanks to the Members of Congress who are here from both parties, demonstrating a strong bipartisan interest in the subject of immigration. I also want to recognize Admiral John Kime, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and Admiral Robert Nelson, the Vice Commandant, thank them for coming. And in a moment I'll recognize a couple of other people.

The immigration issue poses real problems and challenges and, as always, provides great opportunities for the American people. It is a commonplace of American life that immigrants have made our country great and continue to make a very important contribution to the fabric of American life. In one of our counties, Los Angeles County, there are today people from 150 different national and ethnic groups. But we also know that under the pressures that we face today, we can't afford to lose control of our own borders or to take on new financial burdens at a time when we are not adequately providing for the jobs, the health care, and the education

of our own people. Therefore, immigration must be a priority for this administration.

I am pleased to announce today my intention to nominate Doris Meissner for the position of Commissioner of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. I want to say that this nomination has the full support of Attorney General Janet Reno, who could not be here today because of a previous commitment to be at the FBI Training Academy at Quantico. But she has very strongly endorsed and supported Ms. Meissner's nomination.

She has an extensive background in immigration affairs, bringing a unique combination of management and policy experience. She served as Acting Commissioner and in other senior positions in the Immigration and Naturalization Service between 1981 and 1985. She served at the Department of Justice as Deputy Associate Attorney General from 1977 to 1980, and in a variety of other policy positions at the Justice Department where she began as a White House fellow in 1973. Since 1986, Doris Meissner has been senior associate and director of immigration policy project of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She's authored numerous articles on a wide variety of immigration issues and has testified before Congress on many legislative proposals. First and foremost, she is committed to the effective management of the INS and the vigorous and fair enforcement of our country's immigration laws. Her nomination signals my efforts to ensure that we meet the immigration challenges facing our Nation and the world.

Before I call Doris up here, I also want to announce that I have today approved a plan of action to combat the problem of organized crime syndicates trafficking in alien smuggling. The plan involves the coordinated efforts of 12 departments and agencies of the United States Government working in coordination with the White House Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Council. It responds to a major crime problem which has existed for almost 2 years but to date has been dealt with only on an ad hoc basis.

Alien smuggling is a shameful practice of unspeakable degradation and unspeakable exploitation. Migrants and their families must

pledge up to \$30,000 to come to the United States. Criminal syndicates load these immigrants on ships under conditions that run the gamut from deplorable to life-threatening. The gangs then place arriving immigrants in slave-like conditions of indentured servitude to pay off their debts. Deterring this transport in human cargo and traffic in human misery is a priority for our administration.

The plan I have approved addresses this smuggling in multiple ways. We will strengthen law enforcement efforts in the United States by expanding our investigative efforts and broadening prosecution strategies. We will go after smugglers and their operations at the source. We will take measures to interdict and redirect smuggling ships when they are in transit. We will expedite procedures for processing entry claims and for returning economic migrants smuggled into the United States. And we will ask Congress to pass legislation to expedite this process further. We will also ask the Congress to increase penalties for alien smuggling to allow us to use the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act to go after these smugglers and to permit us expanded authority to seize their assets.

With this plan, the United States signals its abhorrence of the trafficking in human beings for profit and its determination to combat this illegal activity. At the same time, we reaffirm our commitment to protect bona fide refugees under our law. This is a good beginning, but there is much more to do.

I'd like now to invite Doris Meissner to say a few words. But before I do, I'd like to ask her husband, Charles, and her daughter, Christine, to stand and be recognized. It's nice to have you with us today.

Chairman Brooks, I want to thank you and all the Members of Congress who are here. And I'd like to now introduce our designate to run the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Ms. Doris Meissner.

[At this point, Ms. Meissner made brief remarks.]

The President. If you have any questions of Ms. Meissner or me, we'll take a couple.

Chinese Immigrants

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned that this problem began or has been going on for 2

years. Was there some event that precipitated it?

The President. I just wanted to make it clear that we were aware of this problem before the ship came. And I don't know what event precipitated it. There have been a lot of speculation about the Chinese immigrants themselves and the irony that—it may be that the increasing prosperity in China may have something to do with this because more people at least have the ability to move into the coastal cities and to have a little bit of money to make that first step. No one knows exactly why this happened. We've heard that it may be because certain ships have been diverted from other things, because they couldn't do what they were doing before and now are more available to bring immigrants here. There are all kinds of speculations about what caused it, but that's not important. What's important is that we try to do something about it and bring it to an end.

Q. Mr. President, the Chinese problem is a—

The President. The House Members have to have a vote.

Q. —Mexican border. What are you going to do about that?

The President. The House Members have to be excused to go to vote.

Go ahead, Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News], I'm sorry. You're next.

Mexico

Q. Sir, I want to point out to you that for generation after generation, Democrats and Republicans have refused to face the problems of immigration on the Mexican border. And that's where people come through, not only from Mexico. A thousand a night at least get by at one place south of San Diego alone. And that's got to be faced up to. But people come from all over the world to Mexico to come in here. And they don't have to pay \$30,000, they just pay the—[inaudible]—about \$500.

Ms. Meissner. Well, obviously we have a—between the United States and Mexico is a border between countries with the largest income differential of any countries that have a single border. So there's going to be an effort for people to come to the United States. We obviously need to do border con-

trol, but we also need to be thinking about development to our south. And the NAFTA that is going to be debated in the next couple of months is a very, very important step in that direction, and I hope that we can support it.

The President. We did not rehearse this, but let me, if I might reinforce that. We have asked for more border guards. I asked for several hundred more in the jobs package that I asked the Congress to pass earlier. And we can do a better job. I think that's clear. We can do a better job if we have more people. But in the end, I think what Ms. Meissner said has to be looked at, the pure economic realities.

One of the arguments for having the right kind of trade agreement with Mexico is to raise incomes in Mexico and create more jobs there. They'll not only buy more of our products, but the incentive to leave home to make a decent living for one's family will go down dramatically. So that's another one of the very important benefits of NAFTA. And I swear we did not coordinate our responses. I didn't know she was going to say that.

Employer Sanctions

Q. Do you think that employer sanctions should be made in order to control better this kind of problem in the United States?

Ms. Meissner. I believe that employer sanctions is an important enforcement tool. I think when the Congress passed employer sanctions in 1986, it realized, and everybody else who was involved in the debate realized, that it was simply a first step at the kind of workplace enforcement that we would need. We may need to look at ways to perfect the law. We certainly need to look at whether we're enforcing it as effectively as we can.

Cost of Enforcement

Q. Mr. President, a couple of questions. How much is this going to cost, if you know? And on your list of priorities, and I know you have a lot, where do you place this? Is this close to the top or in the middle or somewhere else?

The President. Keep in mind we have a large budget already, and we have a wonderful resource in the United States Coast Guard and a lot of other people who are

working in the Immigration and Naturalization Service. So I don't have a price tag for what else it might cost. But let me say that this basically relates to everything else we're working on. What our immigration policy is will affect our ability to create jobs for our people, will affect our ability to provide health care to our people, may affect our ability even to pass a health care program in the United States Congress. This issue will be a priority because it is so integrally a part of so many of the other things that we're dealing with in our effort to revive the American economy and strengthen the lives and the security of the people who live here.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With King Hussein of Jordan

June 18, 1993

Peace Process

Q. Your Highness, what do you think are the prospects for peace soon? Does it look any better to you now?

King Hussein. I believe that some possible ground has been covered. We are still a long way from getting there, but there is no other alternative. I believe that we must do everything we can not to let the moment pass without——

Q. What's the main stumbling block?

King Hussein. It would complicate, possibly, to attempt to try to explain what the main stumbling block is. I believe that it's one of, hopefully, the Palestinians being able to feel that they are able to speak for themselves and contribute their share in shaping the peace that is comprehensive, that is so very, very important to all of us.

Q. Do you think Israel will be amenable now to recognizing a Palestinian state?

King Hussein. I don't know what Israel would accept or otherwise, but I believe that there is one important element, and that is that people on either side of the divide feel that this is the moment and are determined